1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

243 ance is unknown. War or banditry may ruin a merchant, but
311 a farmer will probably come through a period of disorder at
423 least with his land intact and sufficient part of the crop to live on. Although public order in western Yunnan is now well maintained, it was not always so; even within the memory of men still quite young the roads were unsafe and one could not venture a few miles from the city without running the risk of robbery.

The peculiarity of the Min Chia system is not therefore the high value placed on land itself, but the exclusive preference for rice lands. If the lack of public security in the past was the only reason for high land values it would apply as much to the mountains as to the plain, indeed perhaps more, for the inhabitants of a mountain district would be too remote to suffer much risk of robbery or pillage at the hands of soldiery. The mountain lands, however, are not regarded as worth anything at all, they are not even owned. The whole surface of the mountain and its lower slopes is public land, or in other words free to all comers, waste, neither subject to rent nor tax. Yet, though certainly useless for rice cultivation, these lands if terraced could grow other crops, and are in fact covered with wild fruit bushes and forest.

The Min Chia therefore revolve in an economic vicious circle of their own making: rice cultivation alone is regarded as worth while, but as the area of suitable land is restricted it has become very valuable, and being valuable is regarded as the most desirable investment, which reinforces the importance attached to rice cultivation. Meanwhile, overlooking the rice plain of Ta Li, is a vast tract of waste land, certainly capable of exploitation, but which, being
438 mountain, the Min Chia farmer entirely ignores. Since the
435 whole of Yunnan, in common with the rest of south China,
511 also produces rice, and for the most part in sufficient quan-

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

tity to supply the local markets, rice can never be an export crop for the Min Chia farmer. A quantity is sent up to Li Chiang and Chien Ch'uan, which having a colder climate, are less productive; but the cost of transporting rice on mule back, the only means of transport, is so high that this trade can never develop on a large scale. Therefore, in a good year the price of rice at Ta Li falls very low and the farmer's purchasing power declines proportionately ; in a bad year the quantity of rice harvested is not sufficient to provide an export surplus, and the poorer farmers, after paying their rice rents, have difficulty in living off the remainder of the crop, and cannot afford to make other purchases. The rice standard is therefore a check on trade and a factor causing the standard of living to remain low.

The Min Chia, who are in most respects a practical and hard headed people, were not unaware of these disadvantages, and sought to escape from them by producing an export crop which would not interfere with the cultivation of rice, and would yet command a good price in distant markets. Such a crop must have a high value for small bulk, for as it must be transported for at least two weeks on mule back to reach any market of importance (either Yunnanfu or Burma) no bulky inexpensive commodity would show a profit after the costs of transport were deducted. Such a crop they found in opium, which was introduced into Yunnan in the first half of the nineteenth century. Opium admirably fulfilled the conditions outlined above. It was planted on the rice lands as a winter crop, harvested in May before the rice seedlings are transplanted. Therefore it did not interfere with rice cultivation. It was light and fetched a very high price in the markets of Yunnanfu whence it was transported to other parts of China. It thus provided the Min Chia with, from their point of view, the perfect export crop, which brought outside money into the closed economy of Ta Li and

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

312 As the city lies at the foot of the high Ts'ang Shan range there is an abundant water supply. Small streams led off from the mountain torrents have been conducted into the city by tunnels under the walls and flow swiftly by the side of the lanes across the city from west to east. They are used as power for water mills, for washing clothes, and for irrigation, drinking water being obtained from numerous wells.
361 In the eastern half of the enclosure, where streams wind along among groves of willows, and farmhouses lie hidden among large shade trees and clumps of bamboo, the visitor is surprised, on seeing the city wall, to find that among these rural surroundings he is still within the city itself. Indeed, seen from a high point on the mountain, Ta Li with its creeper-clad walls and the dense groves of trees in the gardens looks more like a wood than a city, a huge walled garden set in the wide spaces of green, watery rice fields.

633 This rural character is well suited to a town which is in
438 fact entirely dependent on agriculture for its commerce and industries. The primary function of a small city such as Ta Li is to provide a market for the peasants and to act as a distributing point for the goods which the farming population need. It is also a centre where the richer families can live in a security which the open country did not always afford; where there are schools, law courts, government offices and the headquarters of an important military command. But though this apparatus of government gives an urban air to the town and nourishes a small trade in books, and other articles used by the educated minority, the rice standard really rules the city just as surely as it does the country village. The commerce of Ta Li depends on the price of rice and the industries cater for the needs of the peasants.

369 The interdependence between town and country is not
443 confined to trade, for the inhabitants of the town itself are largely farmers who also have homes in the country villages.

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

441 The remainder of the inhabitants of Ta Li may be classified as artisans, no doubt landless peasants in origin, and Min Chia by race, and immigrant Chinese merchants. These latter come from Ssu Ch'uan, the eastern provinces, and also from Canton. They are not very numerous, but own all the best shops. The silk trade is in the hands of Cantonese and Kiangsu men, and even the local marbles are mostly sold and worked by Ssu Ch'uanese, although the labour is usually Min Chia, and the quarrying entirely so. The Cantonese operate Mixed Goods shops, but have no monopoly of this business. The Hat and Shoe trades, the largest in the city, are not monopolised by any group, but here too the ubiquitous Ssu Ch'uanese are prominent. Each of these immigrant groups of Chinese maintains a Guild House and they continue to regard themselves as strangers in the city, although many of them have been born there and others spent most of their lives in Yunnan. The distinction between a Yunnanese Chinese and an immigrant is indeed hard to draw, and though clear enough to the individuals concerned cannot easily be reduced to a formula. A family such as the Li, although in origin immigrants from Kiangsu, would now unhesitatingly say they were Yunnanese. But another family, settled in the city for four generations, still call themselves Ssu Ch'uanese. It is true that there is a great difference between an immigration dating back four centuries and one dating only four generations.

441 A census of all the shops in Ta Li, and the group to which on average their owners belong, will show how the commerce of the city is distributed, its character, and to what slight degree it is dependent on goods imported from other parts of China and abroad. In this table, while all the shops open in 1938 have been listed, the ethnic group to which the owners belong has been indicated only for the majority, there being some exceptions and overlapping in every kind

1: Fitzgerald H-S (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

shop sells a few imported goods, some tailors also sell ready made clothes. To avoid duplicating the numbers the shops have been listed by their main line of goods. Some of the trades need a word of explanation. Marble shops are those that sell the Ta Li marbles cut into plaques, "pictures in stone" for decorative purposes. Mixed imported goods include such diverse things as socks made in Shanghai, electric torches, vacuum flasks, mirrors, rubber shoes, soap, scent, aluminium pots and pans, padlocks, combs, penknives and fountain pens, and other similar light industrial products, mostly coming either from Shanghai or Germany and, before the war, from Japan.

Paper images are made to be burned in the funeral procession and are not usually kept in stock, being made to order when required. The restaurants and tea houses, very numerous as they are, can be divided into those that provide full meals and those which only sell tea and light refreshments such as sweetmeats. Tobacconists, usually very small shops, also sell locally made coarse soap, matches, string, and straw sandals, the latter article being in constant demand as they are worn by all peasants and muleteers and do not last very long. Wine and salt shops sell these commodities under license, as wine is taxed and salt is a government monopoly. They also sell pepper and some articles of food such as scones and sweetmeats.

The large number of hatters and shoemakers is explained by the fact that Ta Li is a centre for the manufacture of these articles which are sent to other towns in western Yunnan and to the local markets and country fairs. These are the only industries which cater for a wider market than the immediate locality of Ta Li itself. With the exception of a few lines of foreign goods sold by the mixed goods shops all the articles for sale are either made locally or imported from other parts of China. Thus the silks come from Shanghai and

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

438 443 the manufacturing towns of Kiangsu. Since the fall of Shanghai these have had to be imported with some difficulty via Hong Kong and Canton, and more recently via French Indo-China. In consequence stocks were falling and prices rising at the end of 1938. Medicine shops do not handle western types of medicine. Their stocks include many kinds of herbs, and also highly valued medicaments of doubtful curative value such as deer and rhinoceros horn, powders made of fossil bones, and various minerals. This business is very lucrative and the owners of the medicine shops are among the richest merchants in the city. Much of their raw material is brought from the Tibetan marches and from the unadministered forest tracks of northern Burma. Chinaware, by which is meant porcelain, is imported from the famous potteries in Kiangsi. This ware is used by the wealthy; a local very much cheaper pottery from Yung Pei in northern Yunnan is sold at the fortnightly markets in great quantities.

278 443 438 323

443 438 The shops in the city thus provide a fairly wide range of better class goods, but for food supplies and the articles of everyday use the population depends on the daily markets and the fortnightly fairs. Apart from the butchers there are no shops selling produce in the city. Vegetables, fish, rice, and grain are sold daily in the street markets which open about ten o'clock in the morning, when the peasants reach the city, and are usually over by four in the afternoon, when the country people set off for the villages before darkness can overtake them on the way.

The fortnightly "great markets" are held on the second and sixteenth of every lunar month on open spaces inside the north and south gates respectively. These fairs in fine weather attract very large numbers of people from the country and even from districts distant three days journey. During the morning all roads and paths leading towards the city are thronged with peasants and traders, women being

1: Fitzgerald-H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

quite as numerous as men. Some of the goods sold are 443
brought from districts fifty and more miles away, and, 438
especially in the winter months, some Tibetan horse dealers are sure to come down with ponies to sell. By mid-day the market is fully open. Booths are set up in long lines for the sale of silks, and other goods which would be damaged by the sun, temporary restaurants and tea houses do a thriving trade, while the air is rent with the shrill screaming of innumerable pigs, tugging and straining at the ropes which secure them by the hind legs. Elsewhere pottery, bamboo [286]
brooms, brass and copper ware from Li Chiang, fruit from the eastern shore of the lake, mats from Mi Tu, and a line of booths gay with the peasant embroideries made by the Min Chia women, attract a crowd of customers and idlers.

Bargaining is keen and shrewd. No one buys anything until every vendor has been visited, his wares priced, cheapened, and compared, and finally, after many return visits, when the price has been lowered by a nickel or two at most, the sale is made. Traders complain that now the crowds come more to see than to buy, and they regret the old days when opium was still grown. Some of the wares offered for sale are surprising. Carved doors and staircases for houses ready made and apparently of a standard size, are made in Hsi Chou north of Ta Li and offered for sale at these markets, to which they are brought fifteen miles on the backs of girls and men. There are the parrot sellers, whose "wares", small green parrots which are found wild in many parts of Yunnan, sit serenely, untied and tame, upon a large wooden frame of perches, carried on the vendor's shoulders. On the edge of the market, squatting on the ground, the Tibetan horse dealers, in their leather knee boots, with grimy bare chests, and long, matted, lousy hair, sit aloof and alien, watching their mounts, and the Mohammedan muleteers who come to look them over. Towards mid-day a long line of Min Chia

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

Towards mid-day a long line of Min Chia women with heavy pieces of wooden furniture, chests, benches and bed ends, on their backs, stagger slowly on to the fair ground. With the weight taken by a band round the forehead they have carried these loads from Chien Ch'uan and Ho Ch'ing, more than sixty miles to the north, and even for unladen men a three days' journey over the mountains.

Not far from the furniture sellers the pottery of Yung Pei, a town in the High Yang Tze valley one hundred miles to the north, is displayed. No pottery is made on the Ta Li plain, and apart from the Kiangsi ware used by the rich, all the pottery used comes from these Yung Pei kilns. Here one may see a cheap blue and white porcelain, mainly rice bowls, and a wide variety of earthenware vessels many of which reproduce in this coarse material the lovely shapes admired by connoisseurs in old Chinese porcelain. There are also the brittle, black clay cooking vessels from the district of Ma Kai south east of Ta Li, which are made from clay containing a high proportion of graphite, and are fire resisting. These cooking vessels, which sell for a few nickel in Ta Li, and for less than a nickel apiece in the district where they are made, almost entirely replace metal pots and pans for cooking. The only iron ware used in cooking are the large shallow cauldrons in which rice is cooked. These, too, are made in a neighbouring part of the province.

The busiest corner of the market is of course the produce section, where rice and vegetables are on sale, or are directly bartered for other commodities. Here the farmers can exchange one *tou* of rice for ten Chinese feet of cotton cloth of the standard width of one foot; and this is sufficient to make a complete suit of coat and trousers. A large part of the country produce brought to market consists of livestock, pigs, chickens, and some cattle. Horses are not in quite the same category as they are mainly used in the transport trade and the dealers are Chinese, Moslems or Tibetans. The price

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

of pigs naturally depends on the age and quality of the animal, but 70 dollars Nickel, or fifteen shillings, is the usual price of a fat pig ready for slaughter. Pig bristles, which are one of the few local products which have a world market, fetch ten dollars Silver a catty, or about nine shillings for one and a quarter pounds weight. This is in Ta Li a high price, but it must be remembered that only the bristles along the spinal ridge of the pig are of any use, and the quantity obtained from one animal is not very large. Sheep, which, as has been pointed out, are not greatly valued or numerous, fetch about twenty dollars Nickel a head at most, as compared with seventy to eighty for a fat pig. Cattle, either for milking or draught, are a little more expensive, the prices ranging between twenty and thirty dollars Silver a head, or about fifteen shillings to one pound sterling. The price of a horse or mule varies a great deal, as there is a wide difference between the value of a pack pony and a good riding horse. Fifty dollars Silver, or about two pounds, is the lowest price, but a good mount may cost four times as much, and big, powerful mules bred on the Tibetan border, which can carry loads of two hundred catties (two hundred and fifty pounds), were selling for as much as four hundred dollars Silver or nearly £16 0*s.* 0*d.* a head. It is true that this high price was paid by army buyers at the autumn fair in 1938, and is not normal.

Although the character of this market remains much the same throughout the year there are seasonal changes. Thus in the beginning of autumn large numbers of quilts and warm coats are offered for sale, and in the summer umbrellas, "rain cloth"—a kind of local oil cloth—and palm fibre rain cloaks worn by the farmers, are in great demand, for the Min Chia, like the Chinese, hate getting wet. Towards the end of the lunar year, when the great New Year settling day is approaching, the market becomes very busy,

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

and in this month it is sometimes possible to find curios—usually of no value—which have been sold by some family in urgent need of funds. As a rule, however, the stock of the few merchants who sell curios, or secondhand objects of all descriptions, is as valueless as it is varied. Rusty swords, spearheads and daggers, are mixed up with bottles, tins, and cracked porcelain, cheap jade ornaments, silver bangles, an occasional broken bronze Buddha, and a quaint assortment of rubbish of European origin such as old table knives and forks, brass buttons of a Ghurka regiment, a battered English Grammar, or an old pair of opera glasses with the lenses missing. As an inspection of some European Curio shops "Chinese" wares shows equally well, the rubbish of one culture is a "curio" in another.

The fortnightly Ta Li market is thus essentially a means of exchanging local products, and not an occasion on which imported manufactured goods are sold in any quantity. On the other hand the two great annual fairs, the Third Month Fair held at Ta Li in the spring, and the Fish Pool Fair (Yu Tan Hui) held near Shang Kuan at the northern end of the plain, in the autumn, draw merchants from distant places to sell their wares, and afford the country people over a wide area an opportunity of buying the products of the coast and foreign countries. These two fairs, one in the brief slack season before the wheat is harvested and the rice planted, the other held just before the rice harvest, are timed to fit in with the programme of the farmers' year, so that the peasants can find leisure to travel some distance to attend them, when the weather is suitable. The Third Month usually corresponds fairly closely to the Solar April, before the monsoon breaks, and the Yu Tan Hui held in the Eighth Month, falls in the Solar month of September, when the rainy season is nearly over and the rains have in any case become sporadic and slighter.

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AES Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AES

THE CITY OF GREAT PRINCIPLES

The Third Month Fair, *Sa Wa Dser* in Min Chia or *San Yueh Kai* to the Chinese is held on the 16th of the Third Lunar Month this being the traditional birthday of the Boddhisatva Kuan Yin (Avolekitesvara) and the official name (never used) for the Fair is "Kuan Yin Shih" the "Kuan Yin Fair". The Fair usually lasts about five days, the date of termination depending on the volume of business. It is famous all over Yunnan, and seems to be very ancient, as it is said to have been instituted by King Pi Lo ko of Nan Chao in the eighth century. To-day one is constantly told that business is far less than in former times, and the abolition of opium cultivation is always given as the reason. It is interesting to observe, however, that the same remark was made to one of the first European travellers to visit Ta Li, Archibald Colquhoun, who passed through Ta Li in 1882. It is true that this was only a few years[1] after the end of the great Moslem rebellion which devastated Yunnan in the seventies. In Colquhoun's time opium cultivation was still universal. It is generally agreed that the attendance of the public is as great as ever, but that the customers come to look and not to buy.

The fair is held outside the west gate of Ta Li city on a piece of open ground on the first uncultivated slopes of the Ts'ang Shan mountain, which also serves the purpose of a burial ground for executed criminals. Here, among the crude graves of these unhonoured dead, a little town of tents and booths, arranged in orderly streets, springs up on the day before the fair opens. These are the shops of the merchants of perishable goods, cloth, silk, imported mixed goods, and indeed all the trades represented in the streets of Ta Li itself. In addition there are many Cantonese merchants who have come for the fair itself with manufactured goods

[1] Across Chryse, Archibald Colquhoun. Vol. 2. Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington. London. 1883.

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

for sale, and there are the usual restaurant booths and tea houses, always crowded, and serving excellent and tasty meals cooked on an improvised stove of stones and clay. At least one half of the fair ground is occupied by the tents and booths of the medicine merchants, for this fair is above all famous as a market for drugs and herbs. The merchants, some of whom are from the marches of Tibet, bring enormous quantities of these goods to the Third Month Fair, which is attended by buyers representing the great medicine firms of the coastal cities and even of such distant places as Peking. The strange ingredients used in Chinese medicine, deer and rhinoceros horns, rare fungi from the forests of north Burma, the caterpillar plant (which, though really a seed pod, exactly resembles a caterpillar), tiger claws, and herbs which are probably possessed of more useful properties than these things, come very largely from the wild country of south west Yunnan and the great forests along the Yunnan Tibetan border ranges. Deer horns, believed to restore sexual potency, sell at the coast for as much as 5,000 National Currency dollars the pair (nearly £250 0s. 0d.) but they must be of a special kind, only found in the Burma-Yunnan borderland, and only those from the wild deer are valuable. The merchants state that the horn of the wild deer can be readily distinguished from horn of the same species reared in captivity.

These goods can of course be obtained for comparatively low prices at the Ta Li fair, not far from their country of origin, and although the cost of transport to the coast is high, it is not difficult, comparing the cost and sale price, to understand why the Chinese medicine trade is one of the most profitable. The general merchandise imported for sale does not differ in character from that sold in the few mixed goods shops in Ta Li city, but the quality and range of the articles is superior. European or Shanghai piece goods, hats,

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

hardware, and knitted woollen goods, especially for children, are most in demand, Some local specialities such as the hard wood carved furniture made near Teng Ch'uan north of Ta Li is also sold, but not in the quantity offered at the Yu Tan Hui in the autumn. 443 438

The horse market vies in importance with the drug and herb trade. Tibetan dealers come down to Ta Li in very large numbers for this fair, stopping on their way to the tea districts further south, for it is partly with the cash from the sale of their horses here that they buy the tea further south. With their wives and families they camp among the graves that cover the lower slopes near the fair ground, grazing their mules and ponies on the fresh spring grass. In order to show the merits of their horses a kind of "race meeting" is held on the third day of the fair, under the west wall of the city, where there is a stretch of flat ground, now further levelled to provide the "by pass" for the motor road which is planned to connect Ta Li with Li Chiang. The races are not competitive in the European manner, but consist of displays of horsemanship by one rider at a time. An official air is lent to the proceedings by the presence of the Magistrate of Ta Li and some of the officers of the garrison and other notables, who watch from a tent erected on a convenient mound. The horsemen, not all of whom are Tibetans, ride past the official tent at full gallop, and the points are awarded for the appearance of the horse, its paces, and the horsemanship of the rider. The winner is presented with a red silk flag inscribed with the official approbation, while the best of the other competitors get similar green flags. This flag is then pinned to the saddle of the horse, and the coveted distinction considerably enhances its value.

The general character of the Third Month Fair is thus not so much concerned with the wants of the farming population, the Min Chia themselves, as with purchase and sale of

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

443 438 the products of the border regions of Yunnan, for which Ta Li, near the junction of the main east and west and north and south caravan routes, is a convenient site. Held at the city itself it is convenient for the purchasers who have come from distant places and must lodge in the town inns. Although a large number of the peasants from the plain attend the fair, perhaps half those present are strangers from the north or east, or town merchants who come to replenish their stocks. It is this large outside element which has made the Third Month Fair well known to Chinese from other provinces and from Yunnanfu (K'un Ming) whereas the still larger fair of the autumn, the Yu Tan Hui, has not this character and is comparatively unknown even to residents in eastern Yunnan.

The Yu Tan Hui, or Fish Pool Fair, is so called because it is held on a rocky hillside overlooking the northern end of the Erh Hai lake, close to a temple where there was once a large fish tank (now dry). The site is curious, and in many ways inconvenient. There is no town nearer than Teng Ch'uan, which is five miles away, or the decayed fortress of Shang Kuan, distant only a mile, but reduced to a small village within its crumbling walls. Although there are other villages within easy walking distance of the Fair Ground, none of these have more than one or two small and dilapidated inns apart from the ordinary farmhouses of the village.

[487] On the other hand the site has good communications. The main north caravan road from Ta Li to Li Chiang and Tibet passes through the fair ground, and the branch road to Yung Pei, the pottery centre, crosses the Erh river estuary by a stone bridge at this point. Also the fair ground is on the shores of the lake, and the large junks can be moored in deep water against the rocky shore. If the customers were mainly merchants from distant places, as at the Third Month Fair, the inconvenience of the site would be considerable, but this fair is primarily for the country people, the Min Chia of

1: Fitzgerald.H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

443 438 the villages, and they either live within reach or are ready to lodge in crowded farmhouses nearby.

The Fair is held on the 13th of the Eighth Month, a date corresponding in a normal year to 18th of September (1937) but if there is an intercalary month, the date falls later, as in 1938, when it was the 7th of October. In either case the rains are barely over, and in fact rain during the Fair is not uncommon. As the soil of the neighbourhood is red clay, the inconvenience caused by bad weather is considerable.

It is curious that this fair, where the accomodation is so limited, and the goods themselves only protected by flimsy tents of unwashed cotton cloth, should be held in a month where rain is certain and at a place so exposed. The only explanation is the fact that were it held later it would clash with the rice harvest, when the presence of the farmers would be impossible. The Yu Tan Hui is attended by immense crowds of people, nine tenths of whom are Min Chia farmers and their families, women being especially numerous. It continues for nine days on average, and is quite twice as large as the Third Month Fair. The streets of booths and tents cover a wide area on the hillside, nearly every shop in Ta Li, Teng Ch'uan, Chien Ch'uan, Hsia Kuan, and even further off places having its tent or stall. The customers are Min Chia farmers, but the vendors are the townsmen of the neighbouring cities, outside merchants being a minority.

The character of the fair and the goods sold are different from the Third Month Fair; here there are few medicine merchants, and fewer horses and Tibetan dealers, although in 1938, on the news that buyers from the Central Government Army were coming, large numbers of Tibetan mules were brought to the fair. Essentially however the Fair represents a reunion of all the merchants of the local cities at a site where their peasant customers can conveniently purchase city goods, and in exchange sell, not their farm pro-

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

duce, but the products of cottage industry, embroidery, needlework, carved furniture, coffin wood, building stone, leather work and wood work. As more than half the customers are women and girls, the goods offered for sale are largely such things as appeal to feminine needs and vanities. A whole street of booths houses the silversmiths of Ta Li, Hsia Kuan and other small cities, and throughout the days of the fair this street is crowded with Min Chia girls in their embroidered best clothes, and picturesque silver studded headdresses. Here they can buy the silver ornaments which are sewn on to these caps—symbols of good luck and silver studs—and also bangles, apron holders and the silver chains complete with ear pick and needle case which Min Chia girls wear across the left shoulder.

Other streets of booths are devoted to hats—some Min Chia girls from the Erh Yuan district wear men's round skull caps decorated with coloured buttons—silk shops, and those selling knitted woollen children's clothes, a very popular attraction. But almost every shop has something intended for women or children, babies' toys, or the gay caps in the shape of tigers' heads which are favoured for baby boys. The carved hard wood furniture made near Teng Ch'uan[1] is here sold in large quantities. It is well made and substantial: the table tops cut from a single piece of wood may measure 3 ft. by 2 ft. 6 in. This furniture is perhaps the finest workmanship produced in the Min Chia area, though owing to the weight of the pieces and the difficulty of transport, it is only in the last few years that any of it has been taken even as far as K'un Ming.

[1] The wood used, which comes from further north, is called Hung Ch'un Mu, Red Ch'un wood. There are many kinds of Ch'un tree in Yunnan, but the red Ch'un is the largest and grows only at a great altitude, over 10,000 ft., as is commonly the case with all the large timber trees in Yunnan.

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

The easy communication with the fair ground by way of junks on the lake make this fair a great centre for the sale of heavy and bulky goods. Coffin boards, brought from the walnut forests on the Chi Tsu Shan, the mountain on the east side of the lake, have a ready sale. The Min Chia, like the Chinese, are accustomed to buy the wood and have their coffins made up in readiness for their own death when they have reached a ripe age. This, which seems rather macabre to the European, is not so regarded in China. It is looked upon as a prudent measure of insurance, no more morbid than membership of a Burial Assurance Society would be in Europe. The Min Chia are at one with the Chinese in paying a great deal of attention and spending a lot of money on funerals, tombs, and the other apparatus of decease, and consequently the coffin trade uses only the best hard woods, walnut for choice.

Ta Li hard granite cut into millstones, or in slabs which can be joined up to make a water tank, is also brought to the Yu Tan Hui by the ship load, for there is no such suitable stone in the northern and eastern districts whence many of those attending the fair come. Grindstones from further south, and of course, white Ta Li marble tombstones also have a large sale. All these goods are brought by boat, and many of the visitors from the lake side villages and towns and from Ta Li itself come to this fair by boat. In the summer, when there may be rain, and the roads are still boggy it is far more comfortable to travel by the lake boats, protected from the rain if it comes by the mat cabin top, or from the sun by the shadow of the towering mat sail. On the day before the fair opens the surface of the lake is dotted with dozens of boats converging on Shang Kuan and the rocky shore by the Yu Tan Hui site, some deep laden with stone or coffin boards, others buried under a mass of tables and chairs, the movable properties of a restaurant or tea

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

505 house, while on others merchants recline upon the heaped
443 up packages and boxes which hold their goods.
438 In spite of the crowds and animation of the fair ground, merchants, as usual, complain that in recent years their
443 business has not been good. The farmers, they say cannot
438 afford to buy since opium cultivation was stopped, and now since the war with Japan began, the price of imported goods is still higher. In 1938 the merchants said that whereas the people would buy old stock, i.e. that purchased before the war and still sold at pre-war prices, there was practically no sale for new stock, purchased since the value of the Chinese dollar in relation to outside currencies dropped. It is indeed fairly obvious that most of the people came to see and be seen rather than to make more than one or two small purchases. The fair must always have been for the villagers as much a social as a commercial occasion. It offers to the women, and particularly to the girls, one of the few opportunities of seeing scenes of busy life, crowds of people, and of wearing their best clothes in public. This is clearly an important aspect of the matter to them, for at no other time or place is it possible to see so many Min Chia girls wearing their full costume, moving freely unattended through the crowds, making their own purchases, watching their friends or rivals do the same, modestly aware that their looks and costumes are being appraised by masculine eyes as well.

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

CHAPTER 10

ON THE ROAD

491 489 "GOOD for ten years, bad for ten thousand"—the old Chinese proverb aptly characterises the stone-paved caravan paths which are the only roads of Yunnan. To modern ideas there are no real roads in Yunnan at all, except the motor road to Burma built in the past two years. That, indeed, is the only road on which wheeled vehicles can pass. But, as the English word "road" implies, a road was once a track primarily for riding, not for vehicles. Goods passed on pack animals not in carts, and this ancient manner of travel is still the daily practice of Yunnan. Once it is recognised that travel means walking or riding at a foot's pace, and that roads are any track along which a pack pony can pick its way, then all journeys are long and slow, but no place is really inaccessible.

438 484 Consequently, the people of Yunnan, the Min Chia and their neighbours, do intercommunicate, although to the stranger the country appears to be almost impassable. It is really the indomitable Chinese trader who has opened up these difficult and precarious communications, for the indigenous population left to themselves would probably have remained isolated. The Chinese merchant and, to a lesser extent, the Chinese government, built the bridges without which the rivers, too deep to ford, and too swift to ferry, would have been impassable. They built them with the labour of the native population to serve the needs of the ruling race, as is commonly the case in all colonial development. Trade is still in the hands of the immigrant Chinese merchants, and though the personnel of the official class is drawn from all the civilised races of Yunnan its spirit and

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

policy is essentially Chinese. Consequently, travellers can be divided into two classes, merchants and transport men who make their living by carrying goods, and officials and students who travel from one post to another or from one educational institution to another. As in the European Middle Ages, there is the merchant, the nobleman (here the official), the wandering student, and lastly the pilgrim, the Buddhist monk and the Taoist priest peddling charms from some sacred mountain, or carrying out a pilgrimage to some famous monastery.

The Min Chia, being one of the more advanced of the Yunnanese native peoples, and living in a region which is an important centre of communications, also engage in commerce with distant places and provide officials for the civil service. Moreover, since Ta Li and the country round about is thickly populated, many Min Chia have to seek work in other places, even as far as the jade mines in Burma. Travel thus plays a part in the lives of many Min Chia families, the rich seeking educational advantage or official position in the provincial capital, the merchant trading to Burma or Tibet, the poor man emigrating from his cramped family farm or looking for seasonal work in the Burma border country during the winter months.

There are also the regular transport men, muleteers and porters, who earn a living by constant travel over a regular stage. Not all of these are Min Chia. Muleteers are very often Yunnan Moslems, or Yunnan Chinese, porters almost invariably immigrant Ssu Ch'uanese of the poorest class. Very few Yunnanese of any race will do porterage. The muleteers, men of a much higher social standing than the porters, are on the contrary, always natives of the province, and some Min Chia engage in this rather well-paid business. Partly for these reasons there exists a rivalry, almost a hostility